

# Monmouth County Genealogy Society

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## MONMOUTH COUNTY GENEALOGY SOCIETY

### *The First Thirty Years*

**1988 – 2018**

Written by Carol Fisher Megill (1988-2008) & Ray Veth (2009-2018)



***“Would you be interested in starting a genealogy group?”** That was the question proposed by Gary Parks, librarian/archivist of the Monmouth County Historical Association (MCHA), to several people in early 1988. Gary and Carol O'Donnell, Director of MCHA, thought it was time for Monmouth County to have a genealogy group and decided that the Historical Association would be a good organization to sponsor it. On April 1 several interested genealogy researchers met with Gary in the library at MCHA.*

#### **1988**

During that first meeting, those present discussed what they wanted the group to be, what they wanted to accomplish, and how to interest others. Meetings with speakers who could enlighten the audience about family research were a prime objective. Speakers would require fees. So, the first order of business would be to earn money. Publishing books on Monmouth County subjects was discussed and the Publishing Committee was born. Other Committees proposed that day were Correspondence, Publicity, Programs, and Computer.

The organizational meeting was held on May 1, 1988 at MCHA headquarters in Freehold and was announced through the Association and press releases. The flyer announcing the meeting said that this would be a group where “amateur and professional genealogists alike will be able to congregate and discuss the triumphs and failures of their research. The possibilities for future guest speakers, field trips, and publications are infinite.” While the participant need not have Monmouth County roots, he or she would be required to be a member of MCHA. Not knowing what to expect, the Historical Society set up 70 chairs and hoped to fill 50. On the day of the meeting, people began filing in and soon filled all the chairs with many standing in the hall. In all, 85 people attended. From that first group, 55 became charter members.

For the first two years, the Monmouth County Genealogy Group was very informal. There were no officers, only committees and/or committee heads, with the Publications Committee acting as an unofficial executive board and Gary Parks serving as chairman/presiding officer of the group. During those two years, three books and a newsletter were published. Although the group was fortunate to have several knowledgeable and interesting speakers come from within its own membership, it was now possible to obtain paid speakers.

### 1989

The first issue of the newsletter, *The Monmouth Connection*, was sent out to members in September 1989 when Publications Committee member Miriam “Mim” Bryan volunteered to serve as its editor. “It will serve as a history of our group... and will be our tie to out-of-state members” was printed in the first issue. Some of the items that the editor wished to see were: “programs for upcoming meetings; where to find genealogical materials of interest to Monmouth County researchers; projects underway by committees of our group; family and community histories of general interest; profiles of group members and/or genealogists in our area; new publications of interest to genealogists; queries (as space permits); names of genealogical magazines and associations; and recent acquisitions by MCHA.” Many of those items have been published in the newsletter, such as “Spotlight on ...,” “Let’s Visit,” “Look Whose Searching for ...”; and other articles including family histories, and more recently, various series such as extracts of NJ wills, and names on the 1793 Militia Census for Monmouth County. In the second issue it was noted that the Publications Committee selected *The Monmouth Connection* as the newsletter’s permanent name which was suggested by Gary Parks, and it would be published six times a year. After only one year of publication, *The Monmouth Connection* was entered into the National Genealogical Society Newsletter Competition and placed third in its category. In 1999 and 2000 it received “Runner Up” awards.

The Speakers Bureau was also started in 1989 when Nancy Heydt spoke at the LDS workshop on “Writing Your Own Life Story” on May 19. Since then the society’s Speakers Bureau has sent out at least nine members to talk to various organizations on subjects such as publishing programs, writing one’s life story and family history, ethnicity, getting started in genealogy research, family history month, Monmouth County genealogy, Molly Pitcher, tracing family roots, leaving a trail, computer genealogy, getting organized, census records, solving genealogical problems, genealogy software, genealogy websites, genealogy merit badge (for Boy Scouts), First Families of Old Monmouth, courthouse records, New Jersey research, vital statistics, finding immigrant origins, evaluating evidence, city directories, cemeteries and church records, and using timelines in research. While the first speakers spoke gratis, the club’s bureau received its first check on 21 April 1991 from the Union Landing Historical Society, Brielle, NJ. Today, the Speakers Bureau is one of the society’s most lucrative endeavors.

### 1990

By 1990, the Monmouth County Genealogy Group decided it was time to write a set of bylaws (prepared by the Bylaws and Publications committees) and nominate officers. Those first officers were President, Nancy Heydt; Vice President, Janet Borchardt; Corresponding Secretary, Carol Megill; Recording Secretary, Roseann Drew Leute; Treasurer, Joyce Conk; and Historian, Jean Houston. They were sworn in at the general meeting on Sunday, 11 March 1990. The bylaws also called for the group to change its name to the Monmouth County Genealogy Club (MCGC).

Later that month MCGC sponsored its first Family Records Discovery Day at MCHA. Flyers went out and notification was given to local newspapers announcing that anyone who had documents, Bible records, genealogical records, needlework, quilts, photographs, or artifacts would be welcome to bring them in and have copies or photographs taken of them. Prizes would be given for the oldest and/or most unusual. In April of that year, MCGC joined the Federation of Genealogical Societies. It was also in 1990 that the club had its first “Show ‘n Tell Picnic.” It was held in July in the back yard of the MCHA museum building.

Members brought their lunches, chairs/and or blankets and a family keepsake or something related to their genealogical pursuits to talk about.

October 1990 was a busy month. It was then that the club established "Family History Awareness Month" (later called "Family History Month") and had it proclaimed as such by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders. In 1991 it was listed in Chase's Book of Annual Events and mail started coming asking for information. Consequently, a brochure was developed to answer most questions. By 1993 Governor Jim Florio had also recognized it with a state proclamation. Seven years later, thirteen states had followed New Jersey's lead in proclaiming October as Family History Month, and an article in "Ancestry Daily News" (2 Oct. 2000) credited MCGS as the originator. The article continued by saying that its "aspiration was that during this month, societies would do something special to draw attention to and promote family history." On 26 September 2001, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) passed legislation that officially commemorated October as Family History Month, and the United States Senate made it a national celebration in 2002. The concept of designating October as Family History Awareness Month was the creation of Nancy Heydt who was given The Distinguished Service Award from the Federation of Genealogy Societies for this idea.

During the first year of this celebration, the club sponsored several special events (with many continuing in following years). It held a "Phone-a-Fact Day" at MCHA. Several of the members volunteered to answer phones and search the MCHA library for the answers to research questions from fellow members from all over the country. Also, the club sponsored "Family Tree Climbing Can be Fun," a genealogical workshop presented by Everton's International Genealogical Society. At the end of October, the club had its first publications party to celebrate the publication of four books: **Early Records of the Presbyterian Church of Squan Village, NJ, 1848-1900**, by Joseph & Miriam Bryan; **Bible Records from the MCHA Library, Volume I**, by Carol Fisher Megill; **The Beekman Index, Updated**, by Nancy Oster Heydt; and **Resources for Family Research in Monmouth County**, by Barbara Carver Smith. All authors/compiler were in attendance for book signings. The club's publications were highly acclaimed by reviewers from various states' and national genealogical organizations.

### 1991

1991 was a year of ethnicity for MCGC. There were programs on "Tracing Your Italian Ancestry," "Researching for our Dutch Personality," "Early Monmouth County Families of Color" and "Jewish Genealogy." The club had a display and sales table at the Monmouth College "Ethnicity Week." It held a "Genie Gumshoe" program at MCHA. Once again, member volunteers offered to help anyone who came in with a genealogical problem. Six of our members were instructors on "Writing A Family History" held at the Monmouth County Library headquarters in Manalapan. The club began holding workshops on such topics as "Beginning Genealogy" and "Computers." The January newsletter reported that Kay Welch created the winning logo design (still in use today) which is found on the masthead of *The Monmouth Connection* and on many other club items. Later, a quilted version used on the lectern was made by Pat Otterberg. MCGC also bid a sad farewell to Gary Parks who took a position in Pennsylvania. In order to make sure he would not forget the club he helped to organize, a friendship quilt was made by several members and given to him at the second annual July picnic.

Also in 1991, the club started attending book and genealogy fairs and conventions in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania where tables were set up to display sale items and information flyers. In 1997 it participated in the Monmouth County Archives and History Day at the Monmouth County Library in Manalapan and has continued to do so every year since. The popular July Show 'n Tell meetings were held at various places; some at the MCHA backyard, and others at Christ Episcopal Church in Shrewsbury and the United Methodist Church in Red Bank.

The first workshop held by MCGC and organized by the Education Committee was promoted as "How to Start Your Family History." It was presented in December of 1991 at Monmouth County Library's Eastern Branch in Shrewsbury. With 25 people in attendance, a panel of five club members discussed such topics as starting one's genealogy, organizing materials, finding and using federal, state and local governmental records, and researching in libraries and other locations. It was held in response to a request from the county library system. Two to three workshops continue to be held yearly.

Due to renovations being made at MCHA and the club's growing membership, MCGC was forced to look for other locations to hold its meetings. At about this time, it was also decided to alternate the general meetings by holding some in eastern Monmouth County and some in western Monmouth County. Over the

next few years, the club held general meetings at the Christ Episcopal Church in Shrewsbury, Monmouth County Library in Manalapan, and the United Methodist Church in Red Bank.

### **1993**

In 1993 volunteers from the club helped with a Cemetery Survey of Evergreen Cemetery in Farmingdale. A calendar created by Nancy Heydt won a Certificate of Excellence in a contest sponsored by the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, members of the MCGS attended a luncheon at the American Hotel in Freehold. Theatrical storyteller Dr. Daniel Bassuk gave a performance on the Ancestors and Descendants of the The Lincoln Family.

### **1994**

The MCGS hosted five programs on a wide variety of subjects. The Hartshorne Family & Land Holdings talk was given by Daniel Ward Seitz, a direct descendant of the earliest settlers in Middletown. Richard Anderson summarized Early Land Grants and Richard Walling expounded on Indexing Revolutionary War Soldier Records. Our own Barbara Carver Smith educated us about the MCHA Library and the Monmouth County Archives. Arthur Smith addressed an interesting topic, Orphan Train Heritage. To top it off, the MCGS held a picnic in July, with the theme being, "Your Favorite Ancestor Story."

### **1995**

In October 1995, a luncheon was held at the Squire's Pub to honor the Fifth Anniversary of Family History Month. Every year the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders continued to issue a proclamation for this event, and it was gaining recognition in other counties and states across the country. The first Family History Month Essay Contest was held in the summer of 1996. The subject was "Our Family's Cherished Traditions" for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades, 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades, and adults. It was co-sponsored with the Monmouth County Library and Barnes & Noble stores of Freehold, West Long Branch and Holmdel. In 2000 the essay contest was revived (limited to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders) and has continued to the present.

### **1998**

In the spring of 1998, MCGC donated six reels of films, "the old Freehold Transcript newspaper" to the Monmouth County Historical Association on the occasion of their 100th anniversary. In August of that year, the club separated from MCHA, renamed itself the Monmouth County Genealogy Society (MCGS) and elected its first Trustees: Kay Welch, Bea Howley, and Mabel Sweetnam. While MCGS has had a web site for many years, the latest version was established in 1998 and created the following URL: (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~njmccgs/>), and the society went digital that year by posting the "Return of the Militia, May 14<sup>th</sup> 1793, State of New Jersey – Monmouth County," on its site.

There were several quality speakers during the course of 1998. Thomas A. Peters spoke on Tracing Your Germanic Ancestors and Suzanne Nurnberg discussed Genealogical Resources in Trenton Area Repositories. Kevin Shelley shared some valuable tips on Genealogy and the Internet, Bette Epstein informed us of Land Records in New Jersey and David Fowler enlightened the MCGS regarding the David Library of the American Revolution.

### **1999**

In 1999, MCGS co-sponsored a state seminar with The Genealogical Society of New Jersey. It was held at the United Methodist Church, Red Bank. By this time, a Memoir Writing Group had been formed with meetings once a month at the homes of its members. Each month, a new topic is chosen, but members are not obligated to write on it if the topic does not interest them. The only rule is: no criticism.

### **2000**

The creation of "The First Families of Monmouth County, New Jersey" was announced in the November 2000 issue of *The Monmouth Connection*. This is a lineage society and anyone with an ancestor who settled in Monmouth County by 1725 is eligible to become a member. In 1725 the population of Monmouth County was estimated at 4,446. It is these pioneers that MCGS chose to honor, and by January 2003, First Families had awarded certificates to 30 charter members.

### **2001**

Another informative roster of speakers highlighted the year. Included among the topics were Haunted Houses of Monmouth County (Joe Grandi), Avoiding Tangles in the World Wide Web (John Konvalinka), A New Look at Proving Your Research (Bea Howley), Blue & Gray, Black & White (Marie Melchiori) as well as a tour of the Old Brick Reformed Church & Cemetery of Marlboro (Garrett Voorhees).

### **2002**

In June of 2002, a joint meeting of the Genealogical Society of NJ and the Monmouth County Genealogy Society was held at the Monmouth County Library in Manalapan. In October of that year, the society decided that the Eatontown Community Center, Eatontown, would be the permanent meeting place for the general meetings. In January 2003, prizes were awarded for the Family History Month Essay Contest, and a donation of \$1,000 by MCGS was made to Monmouth County Archives Restoration Project to help restore the 1875 Monmouth County State Census.

The programs presented at the general meetings have been varied and interesting. From informational topics such as "Resource Materials in the MCHA Library/Archives," and "State Archives & What You Will Find in Them," to the unusual, "Murder and Mayhem in Monmouth County" and "Haunted Houses of Monmouth County," to tours of such places as The Old Tennent Church, Tennent, and Old Brick Reformed Church of Marlboro.

Over the years, the club/society has sponsored many trips. In its first year (November 1988), members filled a bus for New York City where they could visit either the New York Public Library or the New York Historical Society Library. Some of the other trips taken for research purposes have been to New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, New Jersey Historical Society, New Jersey State Archives, and various cities such as Philadelphia & Washington D.C. There have also been fundraising trips to Drumthwacket, Culinary Institute of America, Sleepy Hollow country, Bethlehem PA (in December), Fraunces Tavern, Pearl Street Museum, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Winterthur, West Point and Constitution Island, Oyster Bay, NY, and Sagamore Hill (home of Theodore Roosevelt), and the Lambertville House Tour.

Besides the above mentioned books, MCGS has published Volumes II through IX of the Bible Records series (compilers Carol Fisher Megill and Beverly Seward Yackel); **All the Addresses You'll Ever Need, a Genealogy Resource Guide** compiled by Beverly Seward Yackel; **Let's Visit**, a collection of columns from *The Monmouth Connection*, 1989-1997, by Kay Welch with the help of Miriam S. Bryan, Gary Parks, Janet Borchardt, Nancy Heydt, and Carolyn Heuser; **Monmouth County Articles in The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey, 1925-2000, Summary & Descriptions** compiled by Judith Green Watson; **Monmouth County and the Spanish-American War: Newspaper Articles from *The Monmouth Democrat* Index** by Donna Diamant.

As of 2008, the Monmouth County Genealogy Society claims over 300 members. It has more than fulfilled the hopes of its originators who wrote in May of 1988 that "the possibilities for future guest speakers, field trips, and publications are infinite." The society's highly regarded publications, educational workshops, speakers bureau and other activities have earned it an excellent reputation among genealogical, historical and other organizations. To many the society is known as "the teaching society." Its members are hardworking, enthusiastic and creative as shown by the achievements of the society's first twenty years.

Carol Fisher Megill - June 2008

*Author's Note: While it is impossible to include everything the Monmouth County Genealogy Society has accomplished in the last twenty years, I have endeavored to convey its story in these few pages. I want to thank all the historians of the society (Jean Houston, Betty Applegate, Dr. David Beggs, Jean Fiske, Kay Welch, and Audrey Maxymuk), and Beverly Yackel for her many lists. Without their diligence, competence and organizational skills, this would have been a more difficult task.*

#### **Monmouth County Genealogy Society 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee Members**

Janet Borchardt   Judy Bretzger   Carol Fisher Megill   Jerry Smith   Beverly Seward Yackel

#### **Charter Members who were dues-paying members as of 2008**

Richard Anderson	Doris Foreman	Janet Borchardt
Nancy Heydt	Lora Tilton Capozzoli	Carol Fisher Megill
Pat Ely	Mike Truex	Nanette Pezzutti
	Dorothy Conway-Comeau	

### **2008**

At the general meeting on July 13, 2008, the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the MCGS was celebrated at the Eatontown Community Center. Judy Bretzger, Janet Borchardt, Carol Megill, Jerry Smith and Beverly Yackel were on the committee for this event. Three of the founding members were asked to speak. Nancy

Heydt noted that the MCGS is a healthy organization and was pleased to see so many new members. Gary Parks and Mike Truex were also honored guests.

At the September Executive Board Meeting, held at the home of President Debbie White, Membership Chair Linda Patterson reported there were 287 members. The treasury totaled \$14,376.02 and 320 newsletters were mailed.

George Joyson, a local historian, genealogist and author, talked about his book, **Murders in Monmouth**. While doing research for a client, George found there were 150 murders tried in Monmouth County courts between the years 1903 – 1932. He reviewed such findings as manslaughter, unlawful banking business practices, pleas, verdicts, sentences, prison records and more.

The November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting featured George Waple from the WWII Studies at Brookdale Community College. Waple authored a book entitled, **Country Boy Gone Soldiering**. He recounted his experiences of joining the 3<sup>rd</sup> Horse Cavalry in 1938 and then when his unit was part of the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944. He also experienced the Battle of the Bulge. At one point, he was the orderly for General George Patton.

Chair Linda “Lynn” Wilson reported the First Families of Old Monmouth had recently received three applications for membership.

Janet Borchardt (standing in for Chair Carol Megill) reported on the Essay Contest. The topic was “Describe your Favorite Ancestor.” There were 77 entrants. First and Third place was won by students from Ocean Township schools and Second place was captured by a 6<sup>th</sup> grader from Pine Brook School in Manalapan.

## 2009

At the initial meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup>, it was reported as of December 31, 2008, the checking account balance was \$9,350.50, the Savings CD was \$6,077.60 and the Post Office fund contained \$78.70 for a total of \$15,506.80.

Elaine Everett joined the growing list of MCGS’s published authors. Her book, **My Family Tree: Fourteen Generations from 1575-2008** follows each of her direct ancestral lines back to the immigrant progenitor. Not only did she find Mayflower roots, she discovered Revolutionary War patriots, an assortment of ministers, railroad engineers, a cigar maker, politicians, musicians and a 1732 Harvard graduate.

The experience and credibility of our members became increasingly evident throughout the state during the fall and winter of 2008-09. Our Speakers Bureau scheduled five talks at \$100 per lecture. Carol York (Using Land Records) spoke at the Burlington County Library. Beverly Yackel (Cemeteries), Larry Fermi (Using Software to Manage Your Records), Joan Shipley (Preserving Photographs) and Carol York (Using Records at the NJ Archives) each presented at successive meetings for the Genealogical Society of Westfield.

The MCGS hosted five speakers at the general meetings. The topics were Using the Records of the East & West Jersey Proprietors (Joseph R. Klett); Were Your Ancestors Friends? Finding & Using Their Quaker Records (Kay Haviland Frelich); Digging for the Bonapartes in New Jersey (Dr. Richard Veit); Duffy’s Cut (Rev. Dr. Francis Watson) and Grave Matters – Victorian Mourning Customs (Jane Peters Estes). The July meeting consisted of a Show and Tell by the members – with the theme being: Your Most Interesting or Unusual Document.

The September 2009 issue of TMC reported that Joan Shipley, long-time active MCGS member and current greeter, published her first book. After 25 years of researching her ancestors, she wrote a family history; **The Koeune Immigrants to America and Their Luxembourg Ancestors**.

Carol Megill obtained a proclamation from Governor Corzine in honor of Family History Month. The signed document was proudly displayed at Archives Day in October.

Family History Month Chairperson Carol Megill, announced the winners of the Essay Contest. The first prize winner was Lauren Cooper, a fifth grader at Ocean Township Intermediate School. The theme was: “A Family Tradition: How it Continues.” All of the winners were invited to the awards ceremony in January. Long time member and hospitality hostess Nadine Jeffrey promised to make her beautiful gingerbread men for all recipients!

## 2010

The start of a new decade saw a fantastic group of speakers at our general meetings throughout the year. The subjects were Bastards, Bridges and Bawdy Houses (Jerry Smith), A Second Look: What Are You Missing? (Casey Zahn), Native Americans in Early Monmouth County (George Efinger), Who Do You Say I Am? Leaving a Trail (Beverly Yackel) and British Genealogy: Searching From Across the Ocean (Melissa Johnson). The July Show 'N Tell get together resulted in a lively discussion of "Share Your Favorite Website."

The March edition of the TMC included a rather interesting article by Lynn Wilson, FFOMC Chairperson. The topic for this ongoing series was "The Stillwells and Claytons: First Families of Old Monmouth." The May newsletter had a revealing story with a photo of Heidi Pehelon inspecting Essex County orphanage records at the Newark Public Library. The library now houses record books ranging from 1868-1929 for the Newark Orphan Asylum and from 1886-1911 for the Protestant Foster Home.

The MCGS teamed up with the Genealogical Society of NJ on a dynamic Spring Seminar, held on June 5, 2010 at Monmouth University in West Long Branch. Among the topics were the Dutch Reformed Church in America, United Methodist Church Records, Quaker Records, Who's Been Living in My House? – Using City Directories (by our own Larry Fermi), Coping with the Common Surname and Using DAR Collections in Washington, D.C.

At the May general meeting, George Efinger portrayed a member of the Lenni Lenape tribe in Colonial New Jersey, complete with costume and body paint. His memorable presentation included explanations of life as it existed for non-European residents of the American Revolution.

Lynn Wilson long wondered about where the graveyard of her husband's Hendrickson family was located in Holmdel. With the help of Judy Bretzger and her son, Paul, and chance and persistence, they found a long abandoned cemetery in the woods that were part of Cedar Village, a gated, age restricted community. When they found the actual graveyard, the headstones were either covered with brambles or half buried. They enlisted the help of some of the community members and cleaned up the cemetery. One of the more notable people buried there is Daniel Hendrickson, Sr., who commanded a troop of light horsemen during the Revolutionary War.

The September issue of *The Monmouth Connection* was chock full of interesting tidbits and features. Melissa Johnson, a resident of Middletown, was accepted as a new member. It was announced that the entire run of the *Red Bank Register* from 1878 to 1991 was completely digitized. From 1937 to 1947, the paper ran a weekly genealogy column by Laura Conover. Mark White is an enthusiastic user of not only *The Register*, but the *Matawan Journal*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) informed the genealogical world they used volunteers to scan over 100 million records in just the first half of 2010, with the goal to complete a targeted 200 million. This enabled patrons to search completed indexes and images at [pilot.familysearch.org](http://pilot.familysearch.org). "The Spotlight on..." column was on Joyce Stewart-DeLaCruz, who despite living in Oregon, served as a trusted proofreader for TMC. Joyce was raised in Shark River Hills and her ancestors can be traced to Penelope Stout!

A new German Research and Discussion Group was formed in November. Joan Shipley was selected to chair the group, which was opened to all MCGS members. "One fourth of the American population has German ancestors," Joan explained. "Come explore with us the genealogy and history of your German ancestors."

## 2011

Treasurer Lou Friedersdorff reported the checking and post office accounts have a balance of \$12,398.08, and the business money market account has 7,043.27 for a total of \$19,442.25. Income from December, 2010 was \$364.00 (Membership dues - \$335 and publication sales - \$29.00). Expenses in December were \$529.08 (Newsletter publication and mailing).

In January, the winners of the 2010 Family History Month Essay contest were honored prior to the general meeting. Chairperson Carol Megill reported that there were 156 entries from ten different schools. The theme was "Tell Us Why Your Immigrant Ancestors Came to America." The judges were Carol, Judy Bretzger, Jean Fiske and Nadine Jeffrey. First prize went to Jacob Hogle, a fifth grader at the Land O'Pines School for his story about his ancestors who came here from eight different European Countries.

Tom Gallo was our featured speaker that afternoon and he shared his lifelong passion, “Railroading Around the Jersey Shore.”

New members in 2010 were Mr. and Mrs. Joe Grabas, Ms. Jane Pedersen, Ms. Jane Watkins and Mr. Sidney Mitchell (of Glendale, AZ). The New Jersey State Archives (NJSA) announced that the records of more than 3,400 New Jersey men who were killed in action or otherwise during World War I (1917-18) have been digitized and are available online.

Joe Grabas was the headline speaker at the March meeting. His topic was “Good Deeds - Unearthing Your Roots in Land Records.” He described how to access land records and suggested what information they might reveal – including familial relationships.

In *The Monmouth Connection* March issue, Linda Wilson submitted an interesting Monmouth Roots column on The Compton, James and Van Meter Families, who were among the First Families of Old Monmouth County. In the same issue, Mark White shared a book review on Joseph Bilby’s new book, **Monmouth Court House – The Battle That Made The American Army.**

At the May 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, our own nationally known speaker and Certified Genealogist (CG), Gerald “Jerry” Smith gave a rather interesting talk on “Finding Your Civil War Ancestor.” Jerry’s own lineage revealed soldiers who fought for both the North and the South. He provided a bevy of sources where one may find records on their ancestors who fought in “The War of the Rebellion.”

The German Special Interest Group had a successful first meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup> with more than 20 members attending. Several German resource publications were shared to help stimulate others in their search. Veteran genealogist Bob Fruh offered his expertise in reading German documents. Bob also explained the importance of yet another basic resource; *Meyer’s Orts, or Meyer’s Gazetteer of the German Empire.* The next get together was scheduled at the Colts Neck Library on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Carol Megill, MCGS Charter Member, former Family History Month Chair, and author/editor of several genealogy books, was named the 13<sup>th</sup> President of our organization. Jerry Smith was re-elected Vice President, Gail Hahn – Secretary and Lou Friedersdorff returned as the Treasurer. Debra “Debbie” White did a fantastic job as President during her three year term. In appreciation for her hard work, the Executive Committee presented her with a glass biscuit jar, inscribed “Thank you, Debra White, for three outstanding years as President of MCGS 2008-2011. In addition, three new Trustees were appointed: Jean Fiske, Nancy Heydt and Pat Otterberg. Linda Patterson again signed on to continue her excellent work as the Membership Chair and Judy Bretzger continued to add stability as the Editor/Publisher of TMC.

As the new Chairperson of the Family History Month committee, Ann Schaefer introduced the theme for the upcoming Essay Contest. She is having the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade participants write about “A Visit to Another Generation.”

Gary Saretzky, Monmouth County Archivist, closed out our meeting schedule on November 13<sup>th</sup> with a program on “Edward Steichen and World War II Photography.” The slide lecture traced Steichen’s illustrious career, with a focus on World War II. Also in November was the fall workshop. This year’s focus was on “Growing Your Family Tree.” The subjects covered were U.S. Census Records, Researching on the Internet, Citing Internet Sources, Using Footnote.com and Using Ancestry.com.

## 2012

Officers elected for 2012-2013 were Carol Megill, President; Melissa Johnson, Vice President; Lou Freidersdorff, Treasurer; and Barbara Valentin, Secretary.

Claire Keenan Agthe, a professional genealogist and popular speaker in the New Jersey/Philadelphia area, was the keynote speaker at the general meeting in September. Her talk was titled “Introduction to Irish Research” and focused on what Irish records are available for research.

Editor Judy Bretzger wrote a lovely feature on Barbara Valentin in the “Spotlight on...” column. Barbara, who assumed the duties of Secretary, took interest in her family tree many years ago while living in Vermont. Her mother and grandmother would take her to four cemeteries every Memorial Day, looking at headstones and trying to visualize the ancestors who lay beneath them. She even has roots going back to Stephen Hopkins and the Mayflower!

There were some exciting workshops held by the MCGS, with the theme focusing on “Energize Your Research.” The October 6<sup>th</sup> discussions were on Birth, Marriage & Death Records; The Genealogical Proof Standard; Tools for Brick Wall Demolition; and Internet Research for the Beginner.” The November 3<sup>rd</sup>



workshop addressed “Using the 1940 Census; Researching beyond the Death Certificate; Non-population Census Schedules (manufacturing and mortality); Immigration Records; and Mobile Apps for Genealogy.” Linda Wilson, Family History Month Chair, announced the theme of this year’s essay contest for fifth and sixth grade students in Monmouth County. She chose “Where in the World Did You Come From?”

### 2013

Vice President and Program Chairperson Melissa Johnson assembled a strong group of speakers to address the MCGS at our general meetings. Carol Scheaffer and Nancy Nelson of the Central Jersey Genealogical Society teamed up on the intriguing perspective of “Would I Lie to You? The Many Ways in Which Our Ancestors Lead Us Astray.” They shed light on how we can protect ourselves from typos and even deliberate misinformation on such documents as death certificates and other vital records such as tombstones and obituaries. Veteran speaker and MCGS member, Larry Fermi delivered an eye-opening talk on “Let’s Make A Deal: FDR’s New Deal Works Programs.” He provided details on the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). These work relief programs were primarily for unemployed, unmarried men from “relief families” who were between the ages of 18-25.

*The Monmouth Connection* reported that longtime member and professional genealogist Michelle Chubenko, introduced a new genealogy blog. The general intent was to share New Jersey genealogical tidbits, information and research finds with others.

In the May edition of TMC, President Carol Megill wrote about The Stories Behind the Photographs. Not only does she have hundreds of photos handed down from her ancestors, she found a loose photo that was not related to her. She did some research and found out that this ambrotype photo had a history that went back to the battlefield at Gettysburg in 1863!!

Members of TMC took a quick trip to survey the new NARA research facility in Manhattan. They found the sleek, new center to be comfortable, inviting and user friendly. They encouraged future visitors to view the NARA.gov website before making a personal visit.

The MCGS Speaker’s Bureau has been providing a free service to genealogists in Monmouth County through the County Clerk’s office. Chairperson Beverly Yackel could be found presenting genealogy workshops on such topics as “Getting Started in Genealogy” and “Organizing Your Family Research.”

When Tom Brady was named co-chairperson (with George Adams) of the MCGS Education Committee, it was a natural fit for the retired Detective Sergeant from the Neptune Police Department. In that position, he ran the Identification Bureau and honed his research skills. His genealogical interests and his sense of humor are evident in his journal/blog “Looking up the Family Kilt.” Tom also volunteers for Find-A-Grave.

### 2014

Linda Wilson took over the unenviable task of succeeding President Carol Megill in the top position for the MCGS. There is no doubt, however, that her enthusiasm, personality and vast genealogical experience will enable her to be a great leader for the society during the next three years.

Ray Veth, chairperson of the Family History Month committee, announced that the Essay Contest theme would be “Time Travel to a Past Generation.” The MCGS agreed to donate \$250 to the “Preserve the Pensions War of 1812 Digitization Project.”

Member Nancy O’Connell Ronning shared a wonderful story about how her interest in genealogy started many years ago upon discovering the discharge papers of her great-grandfather from the Civil War. After conducting exhaustive and detailed research, Nancy published a book entitled **Kellys of Kildare, Volume I: The Story of an Irish Family Line Through Three Hundred Years** and the larger format **Kellys of Kildare, Volume II: the Source Book**. Nancy offered some words of wisdom that apply to all genealogists: “The key to a successful family history is to set the scene and use history, geography and local color to flesh out the names and dates.”

The Spirit of New Jersey State History Fair was held on May 10th at Washington Crossing State Park. Members of the MCGS manned a booth at the event.

Veteran researcher and professional genealogist, Michelle Chubenko, gave an intriguing presentation on the New Jersey State Census from 1855-1915. A former MCGS Education Committee Chair for the MCGS, Michelle provided fresh insights into how to take advantage of these valuable records.

In the May issue of *The Monmouth Connection*, Judy Bretzger wrote a wonderful column in the Bookworm Reviews section. The book she read was **Hiding the Past – A Genealogical Crime Mystery** by Nathan

Dylan Goodwin. The story line takes the reader on two parallel tracks. The first is the search by the protagonist genealogist on the search for his client's research. The other deals with his own painful yearning to discover more of his shrouded family history.

Another informative presentation at a general meeting was given by Catherine "Casey" Zahn. Her topic was "Using Newspapers to Push Your Research." Casey shared how she searches for articles online, and dealing with the most widely used newspaper search services. Claire Keenan also gave an encore performance when she spoke on "Beyond the Basics of Irish Research." This program focused on Irish records such as Tithe Applotments and Griffiths Valuation.

At the November 9<sup>th</sup> General Membership meeting, Treasurer Susan O'Brien reported that the total monies in all accounts was \$16,602.38.

## 2015

Joe Grabas, an active member of the MCGS, kicked off the year in the January general meeting with a conversation about his warmly received, new book, **Owning New Jersey**. He used the book to demonstrate the value of land records research as they relate to deeds, mortgages and leases – starting with the early settlers who built New Jersey.

The Spotlight on... column of *The Monmouth Connection*, focused on veteran member Lynne Klemens. A valuable contributor to TMC, she has been a reliable proofreader, transcriber and typist for Middletown Book Two, and a transcriber of the Monmouth County Will Abstracts. In addition to her genealogical endeavors, Lynne wrote and published her first book, **Save the Children; Save Our Country**. A former teacher, she wrote the book as a parental guide for the creation of successful students.

Three new Special Interest Groups were introduced in 2015. The Irish SIG was created in July with Judy Bretzger and Susan Fugate O'Brien coordinating the group. The meetings were held at Susan's in Fair Haven. Donna Diamant also initiated a new Scots-Irish Special Interest Group. Charles Lawson took charge of the African-American SIG and scheduled meetings for the second Saturday of the month at the Calvary Baptist Church in Red Bank.

The Monmouth County Genealogy Society was well represented with a booth at this year's New Jersey History Fair. The event was held on May 9<sup>th</sup> at Battleground Park in Freehold.

Professional genealogist Rich Venezia entertained our March general meeting when he covered "Italian-Americans: Finding Your Roots in the Old Country." His talk included identifying the place of origin of our Italian immigrants and how to use naturalization records.

The July meeting featured Judy Russell, the Legal Genealogist. Judy is a nationally renowned speaker. Her topic was "Rogues, Rascals & Rapsallions" in which she addressed the issue of Black Sheep in one's family tree. In September, our own Rick Geffken delivered an interesting talk on "Early Monmouth Families – They're Still Around Us."

Ed Raser was named the recipient of the Barbara Carver Smith Award. He was honored at Archives Day for his many years of service to the genealogy and history communities with his books, most notably **New Jersey Graveyard and Gravestone Inscriptions in Monmouth County**.

In the September issue of *The Monmouth Connection*, Linda Wilson wrote an enlightening President's Message about "You Might Meet a Cousin at MCGS." "Lynn" shared the story about how she realized she is related to fellow member Diane Hudson as they were both working on breaking down some common brick walls.

In October, the MCGS hosted a workshop on "Hatched, Matched & Dispatched." Presentations on Vital Records (and the SSDI) and Cemetery Research & Obituaries (and newspapers) were on the agenda.

## 2016

MCGS President Linda Wilson had the good fortune to meet some of her distant cousins at the Wainright Family Reunion in Farmingdale on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The Wainrights were prominent in Manasquan and Farmingdale during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Linda has traced this family ancestry to a Daniel Wainright who was born in 1700!! The Wainright family home (and business) still stands today on Main Street in Farmingdale.

The Speakers Program arranged presentations on a wide variety of topics in 2016. Topics covered were "New Jersey Soldiers in the Continental Army (Art Green); Emigrants and Exiles: The Ireland they Left

(Henry McNally); Genealogy: It's not a tree or a chart – it's a story! (Maureen Wlodarczyk), Digging for Roots in the Garden State (Michelle Chubenko) and a Dead Actors Guild Graveyard Tour of Christ Church in Shrewsbury.

In the final general meeting of the year, Dr. Richard Haberstroh gave his lecture on “Tunneling Through German Immigrant Research: a Case Study” to a packed house. One of the founders of the German Genealogy Group, Richard traced his own lineage from Germany to their immigration to the United States between 1835 and 1852.

Sixteen students throughout Monmouth County were selected as winners of the Family History Month Essay Contest. Once again, the quality of the essays submitted was excellent. The winning students represented the following schools: New Monmouth Elementary School (10), Middletown Village School (2), Shrewsbury Borough School (1) and Pine Brook School of Manalapan (2). Chairperson Ray Veth again donated gold medals from his supply at Beacon Awards & Signs, as well as personalized certificates and 5 generation pedigree charts. The actual awards ceremony was held on March 12, 2017 and in addition to the students and their families, there were five teachers, two Principals and the Middletown Superintendent of Schools in attendance.

## 2017

The January general meeting featured well known speaker Casey Zahn. Her subject was “Google Driving Miss Genealogy.” She shared plenty of tips on how to use Google as part of one's family tree research and writing.

German SIG Chair Debbie White coordinated a luncheon at Sebastian's Schnitzel House in Wrightstown on February 18, 2017. Authentic German food was served and a good time was had by all.

Nancy Ronning hosted the Memoirs SIG at her home. The discussion was on “Christmas Memories.” Nancy also wrote a book review in *The Monmouth Connection*. The book she reviewed was **The Stranger in My Genes** by Bill Griffeth. Griffeth tells a tale about his family tree when he takes a DNA test and the results do not match what he always thought to be his family.

Bev Yackel was the featured speaker at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Her practical talk was in two parts – “Ways to Get More Organized” and “Re-Organizing Your Research Files.” She addressed the issues of Basic Steps of Getting Started, Your Office Space, Keeping Track of Correspondence, Helpful Forms, Creating Timelines and the biggie, “Procrastination.”

At the end of the May meeting, Mark White took over the Presidency from Linda Wilson. Barbara Griffin assumed the Treasurer's duties, as she followed up the vigilant efforts of Susan Fugate O'Brien. Nancy Ronning returned as the Vice President and Gail Hahn signed on for her 11<sup>th</sup> year as the Secretary.

At our July session, Joe Grabas, long time member of the MCGS, entrepreneur, lands records expert and successful author addressed the topic, “So You Want to Write a Book: Sharing Your Story and Passion.” He answered many questions of the prospective author, such as: How do you get started? How long does it take? How much does it cost? How much can I profit? How do I find a publisher?

The research and reporting skills of one of our most valued members, Linda Patterson, came to the fore in TMC when she wrote the first of a four part series on the Legacy of the Hartshorns and Hartshorn Woods. Part 1 covered the intriguing saga of how the Hartshorn lands on the Navesink River passed from the family's hands but eventually were brought back to Hartshorn ownership – and ultimately became Hartshorne Woods Park.

Lynne Klemens had her First Families application approved. While transcribing the Middletown Book, Part II, she stumbled upon the name of her ancestor Matthias Van Brakel – a well known name in Monmouth County history! Joyce Friedersdorff retired as a proofreader for TMC and she was publicly thanked for serving eleven years in this capacity. Joyce joined the MCGS shortly after the society's creation in 1988 and along with her husband Lou, their contributions are too many to count.

At the German SIG meeting, Ray Veth told about a meeting he had with a distant relative from Germany. As a result of an Ancestry.com DNA test, Ray had a confirmed match with a 7<sup>th</sup> cousin, Johanna Baader, who lives in Neckargemund in the Pfalz (Palatinate) region of Germany. Their common roots date back to the 1600s. While Johanna was visiting the US in October, she realized she would be in New Jersey for a few days. Ray treated his newly found cousin and her husband to lunch at The Black Forest Inn, a German

restaurant in Stanhope, NJ. Trying to understand one another proved difficult, but the common language of good German food and beverages worked out just fine!

The October Workshop followed the theme of “Searching Europe.” Our treasurer, Barbara Griffin, demonstrated her former teaching skills as she kicked off the program with “Knowing a Little Bit of Latin Might Help Your Research.”

A new DNA Special Interest Group was kicked off on November 18, 2017 under the direction of members Nancy Kelly Bunn and Patricia Walling Conwell. The initial meeting filled the room and it was quite animated. The primary question was “What is the best DNA test to invest in?” Other issues were understanding genetic regions, connecting with relatives, tracing paternity through the male only Y chromosome and adoptees.

The year ended on a tragic note when one of our more well liked and unselfish members, Mary Ann Schulz, was murdered during a shooting at a family New Year’s Eve party.

## 2018

At the opening meeting of the year, Mark White was our featured speaker. His fascinating subject was “Migration Patterns” in which he covered the history of human migration. He began with our origins in Africa and the start of migration 60 to 65,000 years ago, through more recent times such as the invasion of the Roman Time, on to modern times. This talk had great relevance as it ties in with the hottest genealogy topic – DNA.

At our March meeting, Shamele Jordan entertained us with her program “Newspapers: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.” Her experience and enthusiasm spilled over as she took us into the world of newspapers beyond obituaries. She shared creative methods to show what can be found when traditional records are not available or are low on information.

Spring was a busy time for MCGS members as they hosted a Workshop on Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. Mark White, MCGS President once again stepped up to the plate and gave talks on “Military Records Boot Camp” and “Searching the ‘Reclaim the Records’ Indexes.” Secretary Gail Hahn gave a humorous but thought provoking presentation “Don’t Forget To Look Here” with suggestions for overlooked sources. Another member and former Vice President, Melissa Johnson, CG, addressed two subjects: “Crossing State Lines – Out of State Resources for New Jersey Ancestors” and NJ Vital Records, Adoption and Divorce.”

At the Scots-Irish SIG meeting at Marlboro Public Library, Bev Yackel offered a presentation on what she does best: “Organizing Your Family Research.” She provided common sense tips on how to create a easy way to reference – and retrieve your family tree research. In addition to organizing a work area and office supplies, she offered a simple piece of advice, “Stop Researching once in awhile so you will have time to get organized!”

The March issue of *The Monmouth Connection* included a heartwarming feature: “Remembering Mary Ann Schulz: A Life of Love and Warmth Cut Short.”

A new slate of Officers was named for the 2018-19 year. Mark White is President, Ray Veth is Vice President, Nancy Tarbell is Secretary, Barbara Griffin is Treasurer and Linda Patterson will again serve as our Membership Chair. Elizabeth McDermott has joined us as a Trustee, along with Carolyn Megill and Beverly Yackel. Our outstanding newsletter, *The Monmouth Connection*, will again be staffed by Editor Judy Bretzger, Publisher Diana Hnat and committee members Beverly Yackel and Carol York. Gratitude was extended to long time secretary Gail Hahn, Vice President & Program Chair Nancy Ronning and Trustee Gerald Smith for their dedicated and selfless service.

“A Meeting Like No Other” described the planned 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the Monmouth County Genealogy Society held at the Eatontown Community Center on Sunday, July 8, 2018. The Anniversary Planning Committee, which consisted of Bev Yackel, Linda Wilson, Carol Megill, Ray Veth and Judy Bretzger, arranged for a busy and informative day. While members (current and past) were eating, socializing and networking, they viewed a power point presentation by Bev Yackel, in which photos and other historical memorabilia were used to summarize the first 30 years of the MCGS. An updated History of the MCGS was made available to members. Ray Veth added ten more years of memories to Carol Megill’s summary of “*The First Twenty Years of the Monmouth County Genealogical Society*.”

The featured speaker following the anniversary luncheon was a one woman show by Michele LaRue. The topic of her satirical and wickedly witty performance was “Someone Must Wash The Dishes.” Ms. LaRue

portrayed a fictional “Anti-Suffrage” woman of 1912 who faces the confusing question of women’s rights over one hundred years ago.

*Of the 54 original members when the MCGS started in 1988, there are seven charter members who are still active today. They are Janet Borchardt, Lora Tilton Capazzoli, Dorothy Conway-Comeau, Joyce Freidersdorff, Nancy Heydt, Carol Megill and Nanette Pezzuti.*

Judy Bretzger, a valuable and long time member of our society has been named the winner of the Barbara Carver Smith Distinguished Service Award. The award is given to a person who has, through exceptional efforts, dedication and scholarly research, advanced the knowledge of, access to and greater understanding of Monmouth County genealogy and family history. The presentation will be made on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 during Archives Day at the Monmouth County Library in Manalapan.

## Past Presidents

1990, 1991	1	Nancy Heydt
1992, 1993	2	Mike Truex (died Sep. 2012)
1994, 1995	3	Jim Raleigh (died 2013)
1996, 1997	4	Bea Howley
1998, 1999	5	Carol York
2000	6	Nancy Heydt & Beverly Yackel (Co-Presidents)
2001, 2002	7	Dolores Olson (died 201?)
2003, 2004	8	Gail Hahn
2005 May-June	9	Sharon Loysen
2005, 2006	10	Judy Bretzger
2007	11	Beverly Yackel
2008, 2009, 2010	12	Debra White
2011, 2012, 2013	13	Carol Megill
2014, 2015, 2016	14	Linda Wilson
2017, 2018, 2019	15	Mark White

## Officers and Committee Chairpersons

	<u>1990-1991</u>	<u>2008-2009</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>
<b>President</b>	Nancy Heydt	Debbie White	Mark White
<b>Vice President</b>	Janet Borchardt	Jerry Smith	Ray Veth
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Roseann Drew Leute	Gail Hahn	Nancy Tarbell
<b>Corresponding Secretary</b>	Carol Fisher Megill		
<b>Treasurer</b>	Joyce Conk	Lou Friedersdorff	Barbara Griffin
<b>Education</b>	Mike Truex	Beverly Yackel	Barbara Griffin
<b>Historian</b>	Jean Houston	Audrey Maxymuk	Linda Wilson
<b>Hospitality</b>	Kay Welch	Donna Diamant	Jean Wolf
<b>Membership</b>	Carol Fisher Megill	Linda Patterson	Linda Patterson
<b>Newsletter (Editor)</b>	Mim Bryan	Judy Bretzger	Judy Bretzger
<b>Newsletter Publisher/Circulation</b>		Bob Breen	Dianna Hnat
<b>Publications</b>	Joe Bryan	Carol York	Carol York
<b>Publicity</b>	Nancy Luckenbach & Kevin Shelly		Judy Bretzger Linda Wilson

<b>Publicity Webmaster</b>		Linda Patterson	Susan O'Brien Linda Patterson
<b>Research</b>	Jane Peck		
<b>Sales</b>	Mike Truex/Nancy Heydt	Deb & Mark White	Deb & Mark White
<b>Sales-Mail Orders</b>		Henry & Ann Butow	Carol Megill
<b>Greeter</b>		Joan Shipley	Nadine Jeffrey
<b>Speakers Bureau</b>		Beverly Yackel	Beverly Yackel
<b>Family History Month</b>		Carol Fisher Megill	Ray Veth
<b>First Families</b>		Lynn Wilson	Carol Megill
<b>Trustees</b>		Mabel Sweetnam	Elizabeth McDermott
		Mike Truex	Carol Megill
		Dolores Olson	Beverly Yackel
		Joan Shipley	Debbie White
<b>German SIG</b>			Charles Lawson & Sharon Lee
<b>African-American SIG</b>			Nancy Bunn & Pat Conwell
<b>DNA Interest SIG</b>			Judy Bretzger & Donna Diamant
<b>Scots-Irish SIG</b>			Rotating leaders
<b>Memoirs SIG</b>			Linda Wilson & Carol Megill
<b>Monmouth Roots</b>			Joe Grabas
<b>Monmouth County Clerk Liaison</b>			

**Barbara Carver Smith Distinguished Service Award**

... is an "honor bestowed upon an individual or organization which has, through exceptional efforts, dedication and scholarly research, advanced the knowledge of, access to and greater understanding of Monmouth County genealogy and family history, within this particular community and the public at large."

Honorees:

- 2013 Nancy Heydt
- 2014 Cindy Kiefer & Richard Veit, Ph.D.
- 2015 Edward J. Raser
- 2016 Gail Hahn
- 2017 Beverly Yackel
- 2018 Judy Bretzger

**Monmouth County Genealogy Society 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee Members**

Linda Wilson    Judy Bretzger    Carol Fisher Megill    Ray Veth    Beverly Seward Yackel